

Hello,

I am an LICSW currently working in ISD 917 and previously in ISD 287. I am writing in support of the ***Runway with Support*** proposal from the seclusion working group and the shared goal of reducing seclusion whenever possible.

In Level 4 settings, however, there are times when seclusion remains necessary to ensure the immediate safety of students and staff. While the implementation of Ukeru has been a positive addition, it is not always sufficient; we have observed situations in which highly escalated students are able to tear apart Ukeru mats, limiting their effectiveness.

When a student's amygdala is fully activated and other regulation strategies are inaccessible, seclusion has, at times, been the only intervention that allows for safe de-escalation. From a clinical and safety standpoint, maintaining a full continuum of interventions – with seclusion as a last resort – is critical in Level 4 programs. The safety and protection of both students and the dedicated staff who support them must remain a priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this perspective and for the continued collaboration on trauma-informed practices for our most vulnerable students.

Sincerely,
Ann Strom, MSW, LICSW

The "Runway with Support" Proposal - We are calling for the preservation of seclusion as an emergency tool for the time being, coupled with funding and dedicated support for evidence-based alternatives.

- **The Mechanism:** While no one likes to use seclusion, we argue it should only be prohibited *if and when* suitable alternative tools have been identified, fully funded, and implemented with fidelity. Programs such as Ukeru have been cited as examples of promising alternatives.
- **The Reality:** This creates a "runway." It mandates that the state provide funding and technical support *before* removing the safety net that helps us run programs without increased physical holds, law enforcement involvement, shortened days, or injuries to students and staff.

[Ann Strom, LICSW, School Social Worker](#)
Google Number: 612-314-3958
ann.strom@isd917.org

Programs:

*ISD 917 (TESA) Bloomington Transition Center
2575 W 88th St #10
Bloomington, MN 55431*

*ISD 917 CASE Program
14300 Biscayne Ave
Rosemount, MN 55068*